

Memorial 44

Eliza Clark c.1754 - 1759
Peter Clark ? - 1772
Elizabeth Clark c.1714 – 1802
Mrs Susannah Hill c.1718 – 1805

In 2014 when the most recent transcription of the gravestones was undertaken the stone covering tomb 44 was undecipherable. We are lucky however that the 1984 and 1894 transcriptions show us who was interred here. In 1984 there are lines for two people but going further back to 1894 we can see actual names and dates.¹

'Eliza dau. of Peter and Elizabeth Clarke of this city 12 Sep 1759 5 years
Also of the above Peter Clark who died
Also of Elizabeth Clark wife of the above 18 June 1802'



Peter Clark, Merchant of Exeter² and his wife Elizabeth (née Batten) lived in Bartholomew Yard in Exeter. When Peter died in 1772, he initially left “*his now dwelling house with the garden and outhouses with appurtenances situate and being in St. Bath^w. Yard in the City of Exon*” to his wife, and after her decease to his daughter Sarah Butler Clark.³

Peter was one of four brothers born to Isaac and Gertrude (née Clapp) Clark. No baptism records for the brothers have been found yet but their parents' marriage record is extant. It shows that, ‘*Isaac Clarke of Sidbury and Gertrude Clapp of Saint Sidwells were married June 8th 1710*’ in Heavitree Parish Church.⁴

We know little about Isaac, Peter's father. His signature swearing loyalty to King George I appears on the Oath Rolls of Devon in 1723.⁵ If he did leave a will it has not survived. However Gertrude, Peter's mother did leave a will when she died in 1752, which is where we find out the names of Peter's brothers, his sister's in Law, second cousin's and most importantly Land and property associated with the family.⁶

No marriage records for Peter and Elizabeth have been discovered but Eliza the daughter mentioned on the stone was born in about 1754 so we must assume that the marriage was sometime before this

¹ 1894 Transcription by W. H. Hamilton Rogers. South West Heritage Trust (SWHT) www.swheritage.org.uk.

² Handwritten 'History of Butcombe' inside 'Butcombe Parish Register 1798' (D/P/but 2/1/4), Somerset Archives and Local Studies, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.

³ Will (PROB 11/2215/325) accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁴ Register of Births, Marriages, and deaths, Heavitree. accessed via www.findmypast.co.uk.

⁵ <http://www.foda.org.uk/oaths/QS17/1/15/4c.htm> accessed 20/11/2020.

⁶ Gertrude Clark's Will (PROB 11/1379/266) accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.

date. Two further daughters, Sarah Butler and Susanna, were born to Peter and Elizabeth. We do not know exactly when they were born but neither of them had reached twenty-one when Peter wrote his will in 1770.

The 'cave' in the Dissenters Burial Ground built for the Clark's initially cost 15/- in 1759 when Eliza was buried. When Peter died 5/- was paid to open the cave for his internment.⁷ Apart from how much was actually paid there are no actual burial dates for Eliza and Peter.⁸

Elizabeth never remarried and lived for another thirty years. An obituary from the local newspaper shows us something of her character and the high esteem with which she was held in the community. *'On July 18, 1802, died, at her house in Bartholomew Yard, in this city, Mrs Elizabeth Clark, widow, aged 88. – By those who enjoyed the pleasure of her acquaintance, she was deemed a woman of sound understanding, clear judgement, strict honour and rational piety. By profession, she was, through life, a Protestant Dissenter. To zeal for freedom of enquiry, and religious liberty, she united unaffected candour. In her conversation, whatever chanced to be the subject, she was cool and temperate, but open and ingenuous. Calmness and equanimity, apparently proceeding from Christian prospects, might be traced in her countenance and manner, even when growing bodily infirmities marked the rapid approach of death. Reader, imitate her virtues, and hope for a like peaceful and happy exit.'*⁹ Elizabeth's death record is registered at the Mint meeting.¹⁰

In January 1803, the Clark's house was sold by public auction.¹¹ The description shows us exactly where the house was and probably still is, 'situate at the corner of the Mint, in Bartholomew's-Yard'. We know quite a bit about Elizabeth Batten's family, who were all nonconformists. Elizabeth could trace her family back to the Reverend Henry Butler of Yeovil who was ejected from St. John's church in 1662 under nonconformity to the Act of Uniformity.¹²

Elizabeth and her sibling Nathaniel Butler Batten were born to Robert and Sarah (née Butler) Batten, possibly in Ilminster, Somerset, sometime between 1712 and 1714.¹³ Nathaniel became a well-known solicitor in Yeovil and quite a bit has been written about him and his family on the 'A-Z of Yeovil's History' website.¹⁴ The author however doesn't mention Elizabeth his sister.

Sarah Butler Clark was the first of Peter and Elizabeth's daughters to marry on 16th August 1774 at St. Mary Arches in Exeter.¹⁵ John Savery Esquire, her husband, was a banker.¹⁶ Originally from France the family had lived for many years at Shilstone Manor near Modbury, and a descendant of Thomas Savery (1650-1715), inventor of the first commercial steam powered device. It is uncertain whether John and Sarah settled at Shilstone, after their marriage, or at Combe Pafford the Manor associated with the Clark's.

⁷ Report and Account Book of Dissenters Burial Ground 1748-1832 (DRO3693D/0/B/1) www.swheritage.org.uk.

⁸ There is a gap in the Bow burial records between 1757 and 1776.

⁹ Exeter Flying Post 29 July 1802 accessed via www.findmypast.co.uk.

¹⁰ Exeter, Mint (Presbyterian), 1719-1810 Register accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹¹ Exeter Flying Post 13 January 1803 accessed via www.findmypast.co.uk.

¹² <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/statutes-realm/vol5/pp364-370>.

¹³ No baptism records have been found; these dates are taken from death records.

¹⁴ <http://www.yeovilhistory.info/batten-nathanielbutler.htm>.

¹⁵ www.findmypast.co.uk.

¹⁶ The Bristol bank of Savery, Towgood, Yerbury & Towgood (1786-1828)

<https://www.geog.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/chambersofcommerce/bankingpartners.pdf>.

In her will Gertrude Clark mentioned '*The Manor of Comb Pafford in the Parish of St. Mary Church* ' and '*my leasehold moiety or halfendale of all that my messuages or tenement with the appurtenances lying at Tipton within the manor and Parish of Aylesbear* ' both in the County of Devon. She leaves Comb Pafford (Combe Pafford) '*with its Rights members and Appurtenances the clear yearly rents issues and profits of my said Mannor and moneys thereby ariseing by ffines or otherwise unto my two sons Peter Clark and John Clark equally to be divided and parted between them share and share alike*' and after their deaths to their children. Tipton where Gertrude lived, and all its contents were left to her eldest son Isaac and his heirs.¹⁷

The Manor of Combe Pafford first appears in the Clark family when Gertrude's father Peter Clapp was granted its lease from the Dean of Exeter Cathedral in 1672.¹⁸ Peter holds the lease right up until his death around 1718 when his executors ,Thomas Ley and John Stokes, are granted a new lease and in 1737 Gertrude Clark takes over. After Peter and John, her sons, have the lease it is bequeathed to Peter's wife in 1772 and his daughter Sarah when she reached the age of twenty-one. After Sarah's untimely death in about 1778 the Manor was in the hands of John her husband until 1803 when it went to the Palk family.¹⁹

Sarah and John had two daughters, Sarah, born in 1776 and Elizabeth Clark in 1777 possibly both in Modbury but no baptism records for either of them have been found.

After Sarah's death John wastes no time at all in remarrying. Was he looking for a mother for his two infant daughters? John and Mary Towgood's marriage takes place on 27th September 1779 at Walthamstow in Essex.²⁰ Mary was the sister of John's business partner William Towgood and granddaughter of the reverend Micaiah Towgood.²¹ Their first three children were christened at Yeovil but subsequent siblings were born at Butcombe Manor in North Somerset.²² They go on to have thirteen children of their own, most notable of whom is Henry Savery, known as Australia's first novelist.²³

Susanna, Peter and Elizabeth Clark's second daughter married John Daniell, also a banker, on 6th July 1797 at St Mary Arches church, some twenty-five years after her sister's marriage.²⁴ John was from Yeovil and would have known Susanna's Uncle Nathaniel Butler Batten and his family. There is also information on John and the Daniell family on 'The A – Z of Yeovil website'.²⁵ They had one daughter Elizabeth Clark Daniell, born in East Budleigh and christened on 5th March 1799 at Bow Meeting in Exeter.²⁶

There are a few notable descendants of Peter and Elizabeth Clark. Henry Savery (1791 – 1842) as

¹⁷ Tipton was owned by Peter Clark, surgeon of East Budleigh when he died in 1838. He bequeathed it to a cousin Olive Clark Seaward. Peter Clark's Will accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹⁸ <https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/history-heritage/library-archives/>.

¹⁹ Pictorial & Historical Survey of Babbacombe & St Marychurch compiled by Leslie Lownds Pateman Published by:- Babbacombe & St Marychurch Traders & Hoteliers Association, 1991.

²⁰ Marriage record accessed via www.essexrecordoffice.co.uk.

²¹ <https://edpopehistory.co.uk/entries/towgood-matthew/1000-01-01-000000>.

²² See note 1.

²³ <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/savery-henry-2632>.

²⁴ accessed via www.findmypast.co.uk.

²⁵ See note 7.

²⁶ Exeter Bow Meeting (Presbyterian) 1687-1823 accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.

mentioned above. Anna Russell (nee Worsley) (1806-1876) their great granddaughter who was described as 'perhaps the ablest and most outstanding woman field botanist of her time'²⁷ and Samuel Butler (1835-1901) their great great grandson an eminent author and artist.²⁸

Both Peter and Elizabeth Clark mention in their wills a Cousin Susannah Hill who lived with them. She was bequeathed an annuity of forty pounds by Elizabeth. Looking at the records from the Dissenters Graveyard we see that Mrs Susannah Hill died on 5th February 1805 aged eighty-seven just a few years after Elizabeth. She died at the house of the Reverend Theophilus Edwards at Hill's court.²⁹ Described in the Mint Burial register as a maiden lady who had lived many years with Mrs Clark, her first cousin. It is here that we learn she was buried in the Clark's tomb as payment of 10/- was received on 9th February '*for opening of Mr Clarks cave to bury a Mrs Hill, a companion of the late Madam Clarks.*'³⁰ Further research needs to be undertaken to ascertain the exact relationship of Susannah Hill to the Clarks.

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²⁷ 'Ladies in the Laboratory? American and British women in science, 1800-1900: A survey of their contributions to research.' Mary R. S. Creese, 1998 accessed via google books 2/12/2020.

²⁸ <https://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/about-samuel-butler> accessed 27/11/2010.

²⁹ The Reverend Theophilus Edwards was minister at the Mint from 1794 to 1810.
<https://www.unitarianhistory.org.uk/index.html>.

³⁰ As note 7.